

## Women's Fund El Dorado Site-Visit Committee Report

Only Kindness, Inc.

On February 23, 2017, Rene Evans, President and Volunteer Executive Director of Only Kindness, Inc., met with the WFED Site-Visit Committee members for an orientation of the Street Outreach Mobile Office (SOMO) project funded by a WFED \$15,000 Focus Grant for 2016/2017.

Committee chair, Claudia Taylor, and members Carolyn Mansfield, Dori Drake, Paula Grady, Helen Walsh and Emogene Haller met with Rene and her sister in the Placerville Police sub-station where the SOMO unit was parked. Rene explained that Only Kindness, Inc. assists individuals in El Dorado County who are at risk, whether housed or homeless, of being able to obtain services.

The SOMO brings services to homes, campsites and places where this population congregates. Rene conducts client screenings to determine individual needs. Initial intake sessions can take 45 minutes each. With the SOMO they have been able to serve about 20 clients per week including new clients. She and the volunteers she trains provide service and resource acquisition. Rene assumes case management and can initiate individual referrals; obtain phones, identification cards, birth certificates, transportation, medical assistance, and social security benefits. She also participates in HUD's Homeless Management Information System's required data collection. The SOMO unit also provides clients with bags containing bus passes, toothbrush, toothpaste, sample shampoo bottles, soap, band-aids and sometimes a small snack supplied by a volunteer.

According to the Only Kindness, Inc. mid-year report, Rene and her staff of volunteers have served 285 individuals registered in the Homeless Management Information System. She has also provided in-service presentations and collaborated with a number of organizations in El Dorado County, which provide services to this at-risk population.

Rene and her staff deal with a number of difficulties as they attempt to provide services. Obtaining an ID card is complicated by the requirement of a permanent address-something many of her clients do not have. Filing and processing paperwork for clients can take up to two months and the clients may have moved on. Some clients are reluctant to trust anyone and to provide personal information. The SOMO unit provides safe and reliable staff and services for the at-risk homeless population.

The Site-Visit Committee was impressed with the compassionate nature of Rene and her volunteer staff and their efforts to provide services where the clients needed them. We felt that the grant had been well spent in providing necessary services to our community's homeless population.

Claudia Taylor, WFED Site Visit Committee Chair